

SOCIAL ACTION

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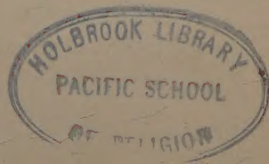
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PALESTINE: LAND of HOPE and TROUBLE

By

William F. Stinespring



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CONTENTS

"THE HOPES AND FEARS OF ALL THE YEARS . . ."	<i>Liston Pope</i>	3
PALESTINE: LAND OF HOPE AND TROUBLE		
	<i>William F. Stinespring</i>	4
Political Aspirations and Conflicts		4
Religious Diversity		15
Approaches to Solution		21
COMMENTS: FROM A CHRISTIAN ZIONIST	<i>Carl H. Voss</i>	30
COMMENTS: FROM A JEWISH ANTI-ZIONIST		
	<i>Lessing J. Rosenwald</i>	33
FOR FURTHER READING		35
ON TO ACTION	<i>Ray Gibbons</i>	<i>back cover</i>

Cover: One of the most important facts about Palestine is that it is the Holy Land of three religions. Pictured on the cover is Rachel's Tomb, on the road to Bethlehem, which is a shrine for worshippers of Islam, Judaism and Christianity. Photo by Underwood-Stratton

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“The Hopes and Fears Of All the Years . . .”

There is a light in Christian eyes as they turn at Christmas-time toward Palestine—the reflected light of an halo and a star. A kindred light has burned for centuries in Jewish and Moslem eyes as they too turned toward their holy places. Throughout its history, the land we know as Palestine has held sacred memories and been a symbol of unquenchable hope. Token of a covenant, Promised Land for wanderers in a wilderness, Home for exiles, Cradle of a Messianic dream, birthplace of a Savior, shrine for pilgrims of three great faiths—no other place has been the object of such adoration and expectation.

From the beginning, Palestine has been also a land of trouble. Warring nomadic tribes have struggled for its possession; roving conquerors have chained it to successive empires; religious crusades have sought to wrest it from infidels. Its peoples have planted in hope, but harvested trouble.

In recent decades, both the hope and the trouble have been intensified. For half a century Jewish thoughts have been directed with renewed longing to the ancient homeland, and a movement for the restoration of Zion has become one of the salient religious and political facts of our time. Eyes burning through barricades of European concentration camps more recently have given a new poignancy and urgency to the campaign.

Thus Palestine is once again a battleground, and the whole world is involved in the search for a just and workable solution of the various claims upon it. Many basic facts have become obscured in the heat of controversy, and alternative proposals have been debated furiously. In his analysis in the pages that follow, Professor Stinespring has attempted to present rival claims and proposed solutions objectively. Comments on his article by representatives of the Zionist and anti-Zionist positions have been appended. It is our hope and expectation that this issue of SOCIAL ACTION will illuminate one of the most complex problems of our time.

L. P.

PALESTINE: LAND OF HOPE AND TROUBLE

By William F. Stinespring

General Allenby, in the proclamation which he made on the occasion of the occupation of Jerusalem on December 11, 1917, said:

Furthermore, since your city is regarded with affection by the adherents of three of the great religions of mankind, and its soil has been consecrated by the prayers and pilgrimages of multitudes of devout people of these three religions for many centuries, therefore do I make known to you that every sacred building, monument, holy spot, shrine, traditional site, endowment, pious bequest, or customary place of prayer, of whatsoever form of the three religions, will be maintained and protected according to the existing customs and beliefs of those to whose faiths they are sacred.

What is here said of the city of Jerusalem might well apply to the whole land of Palestine. Why, then, is a land of so much hope and religious devotion also a land of so much trouble and deadly conflict at the present time? Unfortunately, the religious devotion has itself tended at times to exacerbate the conflict, instead of acting as a pacific influence. However, the problem at the moment seems to have reduced itself to a *political* one, the confrontation of a fervid Jewish nationalism with an equally fervid Arab nationalism. It is with these forces that we should deal first. The two nationalisms will be discussed in alphabetical order.

Political Aspirations and Conflicts

Arab Nationalism

The Arabs of Palestine are filled with feelings of grievance and of fear. These feelings rest upon a sense of nationalism thwarted in the past and uncertain of fulfillment in the future.

The present Arab nationalism is largely a product of World War I. All Arabs, including those of Palestine, feel that they were promised independence as a result of their revolt against Turkish rule. There is no need to repeat or even summarize here the manifold arguments that have been presented pro and con in regard to this matter. It is sufficient for the present purpose to record that all Arabs feel that independence and self-government are theirs by natural right and by legal promises.

The problem is made worse for the Palestinian Arabs by

The Author

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Nations. He has translated a work entitled *From Jesus to Paul*, by Professor Joseph Klausner, from modern Hebrew into English, and is the author of a number of articles on ancient and modern Palestine.



In commenting on the difficulties involved in writing this article, Professor Stinespring said: "So violent are the passions and prejudices generated by the Palestine controversy that any attempt to present the matter objectively will call forth maledictions from one side or the other. My concern with Palestine comes from a life-long interest in its archeology and its religious heritages. Hence I feel that the present struggle is only a phase of a long history, and that the Arabs, the British and the Zionists all have their claims, and all have made their mistakes in bringing the situation to a rather low political level. I believe that each party has tried to do what is right and I sympathize with the suffering endured by all."

virtue of the fact that the surrounding Arab countries are in a fair way to accomplish the much desired independence and self-government. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon have already gained statehood and representation in the United Nations. Even backward Trans-Jordan has now obtained the coveted prize of independence.

The Arabs Say . . .

But what about Palestine? It has been held in bondage, so the Arabs say, for a quarter of a century by the British. Worse still, the British have forcibly opened the country to Jewish immigration, to the extent that Jews now constitute a third of the population, and are talking about more and more Jewish immigration until a Jewish majority is attained and Palestine becomes a Jewish State. True, the British promised in the 1939 White Paper to hold the population ratio to one-third Jews and two-thirds Arabs. But what are British promises? They have been made before, and seldom kept. And already 1500 Jews a month are being admitted to the country beyond the number specified by the White Paper, to say nothing of illegal immigrants, terrorism, and all the rest of the evils brought by the Jews. Thus did most Palestinian Arabs think up to the time when Britain turned the problem over to the UN.*

*In discussing the question of Arab nationalism, some difficulties of definition are involved. First of all, it is necessary to exclude from the present discussion the Arab peoples or states in North Africa west of Egypt, as being more remote from the Palestine problem and thus not directly concerned in it. Moreover, they are not members of the League of Arab States, or Arab League, formed March 22, 1945, consisting of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Trans-Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. It is this League of Arab States surrounding Palestine which provides the framework of Arab nationalism as it affects the present inquiry. It is this League which has declared Palestine an Arab country which must eventually become independent as such, thus giving widespread Arab support to the claims of the Palestinian Arabs themselves.

Within this framework, there are smaller nationalisms, such as those of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Egypt in particular has a national interest of its own which it would guard even against Arab states. The same is true of Saudi Arabia and probably of Iraq also, especially since it has now enjoyed independence for some years.

The states of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Trans-Jordan constitute a natural geographical unit, and under Turkish rule were more or less a political unity. Palestine and most of Trans-Jordan were spoken of as Southern Syria. People moved around freely between Damascus, Beirut, Jerusalem and Amman without troubling about passports, customs examinations, exchange of currencies and the like. Various members of families scattered themselves over these territories and visited back and forth freely from time to time. Many older Palestinian Arabs



—Acme

This map shows how Palestine can be completely cut off, except for the Mediterranean, by forces of the seven nations in Arab League.

still speak with nostalgic longing of this older state of "freedom."

A Common Language

Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Trans-Jordan also have a linguistic affinity closer than that of the Arab States in general. The modern written Arabic (sometimes called "newspaper Arabic") is practically the same in all Arab countries, and with this as a basis educated people in all the Arab countries can also understand one another's speech. But the spoken or colloquial language is divided into more or less distinct dialects. Egypt has its own dialect, and so do Iraq and Saudi Arabia. However, in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Trans-Jordan there is only one dialect (with, of course, local variations, as everywhere). This dialect was formerly known as "Syrian" Arabic, and the name still persists to a certain extent. The local variations within the Syrian dialect are roughly comparable to the linguistic differences existing between various regions of the United States of America, whereas the difference between Syrian Arabic and Egyptian Arabic is more like the difference between American English and British English.

The present fourfold political division is largely the result of European intervention. The four states if left to themselves would probably have formed a much closer union. On the other hand, the fourfold division has a certain amount of logic, and probably will be acceptable to the citizens of the various parts in the long run, provided the craving for independence and self-government is satisfied. This is in a fair way of being attained in Lebanon, Syria and Trans-Jordan, as already noted. Eventually these may even develop strong and distinct Syrian, Lebanese, and Trans-Jordanian nationalisms.

Nationalism of the Palestine Arab

In the light of this situation, it is not difficult to understand the Palestine Arab's feeling of political frustration and uncertainty. His nationalism at the moment is mostly a general sort

of Arab nationalism. There is no local Arab state upon which he can fix his loyalty even if he had a mind to do so. He is now forced to regard Syria and Lebanon as foreign countries to which Palestine cannot be joined. His own section of Syria has now been organized separately as a British mandate and as the container of a Jewish National Home which threatens to engulf the whole country and become the Jewish State of Eretz Israel (Land of Israel).

The thought of becoming a minority subject of a Jewish State is profoundly disturbing to the Arab. Jews may talk of their historic rights in Palestine and their European and American friends may sympathize with them and support their claims. But not so the Arab, according to my observation of him. To him the European or American Jew is a foreign intruder, bringing with him objectionable features of occidentalism and imperialism. The Arab is desperately afraid of the cleverness and aggressiveness of the Jew, especially when these are backed by the might of Britain (and perhaps now America). The Jew speaks a foreign language and wears European dress. He gets ahead in business. Already he has got possession of the best land and is eagerly seeking for more. His numbers have increased tenfold in a very few years. The Jew adopts, in the eyes of the Arabs, a very superior air. Indeed, he, and the British with him, did so from the very beginning of the present regime; in the infamous Balfour Declaration, the Arabs (then about 90 per cent of the population) were referred to as "existing non-Jewish (sic!) communities in Palestine." This initial insult has never been removed. Finally, and perhaps most alarming of all, the Jews have now organized a secret underground army, well equipped and of such proportions that even the British cannot cope properly with it.

Palestine for the Arabs

There thus seems to the Arab now only one recourse: Palestine as an Arab State. There is no longer any chance of being joined with Syria. Even Trans-Jordan has become independent.

The Palestinian Arab, like the European Jew, is suffering from a sense of political homelessness. The Palestinian Arab's nationalism is a general Arab nationalism, as noted above. But he is cut off from the Arabs round about by the European-imposed divisions of his native region. Hence he wants to do what his fellow-Arabs are doing in order to be one of them again. He has not inherited from the past a specifically Palestinian nationalism. Rather, his old local nationalism was a Syrian nationalism. He wanted, for example, to be a part of Feisal's ill-fated Kingdom of Syria of 1920. But now all that is past. His Arab neighbors are achieving independence by having small local states, and then satisfying their larger Arab nationalism by joining the Arab League.

The Palestinian Arab would do the same. He holds that Palestine must become an independent Arab state and then join the Arab League. The League itself has approved this procedure. If this is to be achieved, it means of course that Palestine cannot be a Jewish state, nor can there be any more Jewish immigration, since the presence of even a few more Jews will endanger the predominantly Arab nature of the country. Partition also is unthinkable if Palestine is to become another Arab homeland. Such a homeland cannot be divided or have beside it even a tiny Jewish state constantly threatening to expand. Of course the Jews who are there will be well treated as an important minority, provided they demonstrate their loyalty to the new Palestine and cease trying to get the upper hand.

This is the picture in its extreme form, as portrayed by the most ardent Arab nationalists. Evidence of more moderate views held by at least a few thinking men comes to light from time to time. Nevertheless, an Arab nationalism directed toward the goal of an independent Arab-dominated Palestine is one of the most potent facts of the present situation.

Jewish Nationalism

Modern Jewish nationalism began in 1896 with the publication of Theodor Herzl's book *Der Judenstaat* ("The Jewish

State"). Even before that date a few Jewish immigrants had entered Palestine (Southern Syria) and established colonies, but these ventures had no political significance. Herzl's book did. It claimed that a Jewish State was the only answer to the problem of anti-Semitism. Palestine was to be preferred, but another location was possible. The idea spread among the Jews of Europe and within a year the world Zionist organization was formed. It has continued to exist and has grown in strength to this day.

Herzl negotiated with Turkey for Palestine, but failed to obtain any concessions, although much effort and time went into the negotiations. In 1903 the British Government offered Uganda, in British East Africa. Herzl was in favor of accepting, but the Zionist organization, after much debate, turned the offer down although there were severe pogroms in Russia at the time. Such slogans as "No Zionism without Zion" and "Palestine or Nothing" had, and still have, their influence.

The Zionists turned their attention to piecemeal colonization in Palestine. Many European Jews went there individually and settled in the towns and cities. By the time of World War I, there were some forty colonies with a population of 12,000, and all told there were about 85,000 Jews within the territory soon to be called officially "Palestine," constituting a little over ten per cent of the total population of the area. During the war the Jewish population declined somewhat.

The British Mandate

The Balfour Declaration of November, 1917, and the Mandate based upon it, are

THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

On November 2, 1917, the British Government made the following statement, through Arthur J. Balfour, then Foreign Secretary, in a letter addressed to Lord Rothschild:

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

of course the real beginnings of the situation that now exists. These documents undertook to guard the rights of the Arabs as well as to facilitate the immigration of Jews. But their effect on the Jews has been far greater than on the Arabs. They were hailed by Zionists all over the world and generated an enthusiasm that still continues. Although the term "National Home" is ambiguous, most Zionists today interpret it as implying an ultimate right to some sort of a Jewish-dominated state in Palestine.*

A wave of enthusiastic Jewish immigration followed the establishment of Palestine as a British Mandate, reaching a peak of 33,801 in 1925. The wave then subsided temporarily: in 1927 some 2,000 more Jews left Palestine than entered, and in 1928 the numbers entering and leaving were about equal. In 1932, the number of immigrants was 9,553. With the coming to power of Hitler in 1933, Palestine loomed as the only place of refuge for many Jews, so that in 1935 the number of immigrants was 61,854. After that year the number declined again, especially during the war, but at the present time the pressure from European Jewry to gain entrance to Palestine is tremendous, constituting one of the chief reasons for the current crisis and the decision of the British to turn the matter over to the United Nations.

The disciples of Herzl have always been enthusiasts. The vigor with which they have raised great sums of money from world Jewry (especially from America) and have brought to fruition barren parts of Palestine makes a saga that has amazed

*On the other hand, it must be remembered that there are anti-Zionist Jews, who believe that the establishment of a Jewish State would be a misfortune to all Jews because of the problem of divided allegiance that would be raised. These anti-Zionists say that the existence of a Jewish State would cause Jews everywhere to be regarded with less respect and more suspicion, instead of the opposite as claimed by Herzl and his followers. The present situation seems to be that the Zionists sway the majority of Jews, even in Britain and America, although in the latter two countries the anti-Zionist movement is active. Among the Arabs, on the other hand, there is no real opposition to Palestine as an Arab State. There is merely a minority which would compromise by making concessions to the Jews.

the world. Infused, as they are, with zeal for building a truly Jewish life in the land of their fathers, and filled with pride in their achievements, it is hard for them to see that another people, the Arabs, also have a strong claim to the control of the very same territory which otherwise might serve as the Jewish State.

The Demand for a Jewish State

As a matter of fact, although many individuals from the beginning (1917) thought in terms of a Jewish State, the Zionist organization officially disclaimed on several occasions any intention of setting up an independent Jewish State. However, in May, 1942, a conference of American Zionists meeting in the Biltmore Hotel in New York issued a document since known as the Biltmore Program. The two main points of interest in the program are the demand for a Jewish State ("Commonwealth" was the term used) in Palestine and the demand for unrestricted Jewish immigration. It was Hitler's persecution, of course, which had stimulated Jewish nationalism. In November, 1942, the Biltmore Program was accepted by the Jewish Agency and other Zionist organizations. Thus the demand for a Jewish State became for the first time official Zionist policy, and undoubtedly this demand reflects the wishes of the majority of Zionists today.

We therefore face the fact that Jewish nationalism directly opposes the demand of Arab nationalism for an Arab State with the demand for a Jewish State. Both have their backers outside of Palestine. The Palestinian Arabs have with them the vast majority of the Arabs in other Arab states round about, and the Jews have with them the majority of world Jewry, although the anti-Zionist Jews in Britain and America must be taken into account. In numbers, of course, the Arabs are much greater, both inside and outside of Palestine.

Pressure of Displaced Persons

The problem of the Jewish displaced persons or refugees

makes Jewish nationalism more intense at the present time. Many regard the existence of this refugee problem as an irrefutable validation of the theories of Herzl. Other states will not have these Jews, it is said; therefore a Jewish State must be provided for them. Having been deprived of all other nationality, they must be given Jewish nationality. This argument has impressed many of the displaced persons themselves, causing them to take a "Palestine-or-Nothing" position. Part of the difficulty is that so far the refugee problem has been dealt with inadequately by the great powers and by the United Nations. Passage of the Stratton bill by the U.S. Congress to admit 400,000 displaced persons as an emergency measure would have helped to reduce the present pressure on Palestine. Similar measures taken earlier would have tended to reduce the intensity of Jewish nationalism.*

Terrorism by Both Sides

One of the facts to be faced in connection with the nationalism of both sides is that of terrorism, which reflects the vehemence of feeling. Newspapers have made much of terrorism, especially of the sensational Jewish terrorism which has been carried on recently. But it must be remembered that the Arabs had their turn from 1936 to 1939. During that period the Jews refrained from violence almost entirely. Now, during the past three years Jewish terrorism has been severe, while the Arabs have been quiet on the whole. Thus the accounts again appear to be balanced rather evenly. Each side has to its credit about three years of violence and a similar period of restraint. This statement, to be sure, takes into account conditions only since 1936. Before that there had been a number of outbreaks by the Arabs against what they considered a foreign invasion of their country. But there was

*For a good recent discussion of these points, see Eugene Rostow, "Palestine and American Immigration," *American Scholar*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Summer 1947). *E.g.*, Rostow says (p. 294): "... the starting point for a peaceful solution of the Palestine problem is a change in the immigration policy of the United States."

no organized "terrorism," with training of underground military forces on a large scale, as at present. It must be remembered that what is called terrorism by the outside world is regarded by those carrying it on as a noble war of liberation from the British. The Arabs so regarded their efforts of 1936-39, and the Jewish underground recently has had the same attitude.

In addition to occasional direct Arab attacks upon Jews from 1920 to 1932 and the more recent "wars" against the British by both sides, there has been a number of assassinations by extremists of both sides directed against someone of their own group who was inclined to compromise. The effect of these assassinations has been to keep the more moderate elements from speaking out.

Religious Diversity

In Palestine there are three principal religions, but only two nationalisms. Thus it is seen that the present cleavage is not strictly along religious lines, although the problem of the religions very definitely enters into the picture. One of the most important facts about Palestine, indeed, is that it is the Holy Land of three religions, Islam, Judaism and Christianity. Any solution that disregarded this fact would not commend itself to the conscience of the world. Hence the General Assembly of the United Nations was well advised in instructing its Special Committee on Palestine to give special attention to the religious situation in the country.

The Moslems

We may begin with the Moslems, the newest but largest group. The territory now known as Palestine fell into the hands of the Moslems about A.D. 637 and was dominated culturally and politically, as well as religiously, by Moslems from then until World War I, with the exception of the comparatively brief interlude of the Crusades (1099-1187). At first Jerusalem was considered the most holy city of Islam and

the Moslems turned to it in prayer. Afterwards Mecca and Medina surpassed Jerusalem in holiness, although the latter city is still the object of deep veneration. The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, formerly the site of a Christian church and before that of the Jewish Temple, is, architecturally and otherwise, one of the outstanding shrines in Islam. And throughout Palestine there are lesser Moslem shrines. A memorandum to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry listed 137 of these, with a note that a number of minor ones had been omitted from the list.

The Moslems, now numbering over 1,000,000 in a population of some 1,800,000, have always been jealous of their dominance, as shown by their struggle to eject the Crusaders. In more recent times they tended to persecute the Christian minority, but at the present the Moslems and native Christians, alike considering themselves Arabs, have drawn together against the Jews.

Moslem Opposition to Zionism

The Moslems constitute the backbone of the Arab nationalist movement in Palestine today. They have always been ardent in their religious zeal, and now many of them regard opposition to Zionism as a definitely religious duty. In this they are supported by most of the 250,000,000 Moslems throughout the world. Whether these Moslems can or will declare a Holy War, or how they would do it, is a critical question. But the force of Islam both inside and outside of Palestine is something to be reckoned with.

One of the factors in this connection is the very high birth rate among Palestinian Moslems coupled with the not so high death rate. The net rate of increase is among the highest in the world. This high rate of natural increase among the Moslems has enabled the Arabs of Palestine to keep well ahead of the Jews in numbers, in spite of heavy Jewish immigration. Moreover, it leads to the conclusion that a Jewish majority,

even though artificially brought about by rapid and heavy immigration, could not long maintain itself. This would certainly be true in any kind of unitary solution, and might even be true in partition, since in that case the new Jewish State would have a large Arab (mostly Moslem) minority.

The Christians

After its founding in the first century, Christianity quickly spread to the outside world, and its adherents had no great interest in the land of its origin. But after the conversion of Constantine in the early part of the fourth century, the Christians began to take more interest in their Holy Land. Many pilgrims came and sacred places, such as the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, were established. At the present time, there are about 25 places especially sacred to Christians, and a number of others sacred to both Jews and Christians because of their relation to the Old Testament.

During the Byzantine period, A.D. 395 to the Moslem conquest (637), Palestine was under the Eastern Roman Empire, and the Greek Orthodox Church became dominant. Most of the inhabitants of Greek or Syrian origin became Christian and many Jews migrated to Babylonia and other places. Pilgrimage increased, while churches and monasteries were built in large numbers. Jerusalem was a flourishing city.

When the Moslems came, the Christians were given the choice of becoming Moslems or paying a special tax. While most became Moslems, a considerable minority remained Christians. These Christians retained their religion, but soon became Arabized in language and general culture, and their descendants are thus known today as Christian Arabs. It is often noticeable that they are of different racial stock from the Moslems, being of the dark Greek or Syrian type sometimes called Levantine, while the Moslems are on the whole lighter, in spite of Negroid strains here and there.

Varieties of Christians

The Christians of Palestine number about 135,000. Roughly, they constitute about 11 per cent of the Arabs and 8 per cent of the total population. They are divided into Greek Orthodox (45 per cent), Roman Catholic (23 per cent), Uniates and others. The Roman Catholic church became established during the Crusades and has been influential ever since. The Uniates are Oriental sects that now acknowledge the primacy of the Pope, while retaining their own liturgical practices. They number a little less than 20 per cent of all Christians. If their number be added to the Roman Catholics, the number of Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics will be approximately equal. Roman Catholic influence in Palestine is very great, owing to the large amount of valuable ecclesiastical establishments and to the interests of Roman Catholics throughout the world.

Other Christian groups include Armenians, Jacobites, Copts, Abyssinians and Protestants. The Protestants are not large in numbers, but have considerable influence, owing largely to missionary enterprises of the Church of England and American Protestantism. Outstanding in this respect is the American University of Beirut, which, although not in Palestine, has had enormous influence on the cultural and even political life of the Near East. There were stirrings of Arab nationalism among the student body even before World War I. Today its alumni fill leading positions throughout the Near East.

Economically the Christian Arabs are somewhat better off than the Moslems. Some of the best business and government positions are in their hands. They are frequently better educated, thanks to attendance at missionary schools.

The Christians and Zionism

The Christians in Palestine are now largely at one with the Moslems in opposing Zionism. Indeed, some of the most ardent Arab nationalists are to be found among the Christians. One of the clearly demonstrable effects of Zionism has been to re-

duce the religious animosity between Moslems and Christians in favor of a political cooperation as Arabs with a common destiny. Persecution of Christians by Moslems is not a problem at present; some observers have said that if Zionism were removed the old animosity would again break out, and Christians would be in danger from Moslems. Any attempted solution of the Palestine problem will necessarily erect safeguards for religious minorities, and Christianity in Palestine is definitely in that category. The Jews are now about a third of the population, while the Christians are only about a tenth. The influence of the latter is out of proportion to their numbers, however, by virtue of their economic and educational qualifications, and their connection with world Christianity. Palestine is definitely *the* Holy Land in the eyes of Christians everywhere, and this fact, along with the existence of the Christian Arab community in Palestine, will have to be taken into consideration.

The Jews

The oldest of the three principal religions is Judaism. In its origins it goes back to Moses (about 1300 B.C.). Strictly speaking, however, the term Judaism applies only from the time of the Second Temple, which was completed about 516 B.C. Actually then, Judaism (or its predecessor, the old Hebrew religion) has been continuously present in the land now called Palestine for some 3,200 years. In Palestine was written the Old Testament, or Hebrew Scriptures, sacred to Jews and Christians alike. By the addition of the New Testament, with its scenes also laid in Palestine, the Christian Bible was formed; and the Koran, the holy book of the Moslems, draws heavily on the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. All three, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, are religions of a book, and Palestine is of critical import in the background of them all. In the long run this is probably the most important fact about Palestine and one of the most important facts in the history of the world.

The Decisive Role of Religion

For the Jews, especially, the fact of religion is decisive, since, in the last analysis, there is no other criterion for identifying Jews except religion. They are not citizens of a particular state: even if a Jewish State is created in Palestine, only a comparatively small percentage of all Jews can have citizenship therein. The rest will still have to live outside of Palestine and be identified by the criterion of religion. Nor are the Jews a race, for in race they vary immensely. They use many different languages and are citizens of many countries. The person who fancies he can identify a Jew merely by looking at him, simply does not know the diversity of the group called Jews. Only their religion is a common factor. To be sure, smaller groups of Jews have assumed the characteristics of ethnic groups, as in Poland, or in the Soviet Union (where a Jew may register his nationality as Jewish if he so desires), or even more notably in Palestine, where language, dress and custom definitely set the Jew apart from the Arab.

The fact of Jewish religious interest and rights in Palestine is so obvious and well understood that no argument is needed to prove it. Even more than the Moslems and Christians, the Jews have a religious veneration for the very soil of the country, as for no other. Only so can one explain the zeal and devotion with which the Jewish immigrants have transformed barren wastes into fertile garden spots, and the vast sums of money contributed by world Jewry to aid the work of reclamation. Only religion can explain these facts.

Obviously then, any worthy attempt at a solution for Palestine must safeguard the religious rights of Jews, Moslems and Christians.*

*Note the expression of appreciation for the religious significance of the land of Palestine in the Report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry (U.S. edition, p. 38): "The religious importance of Palestine to Moslems, Jews and Christians alike makes it improper to treat it either as an Arab State or as exclusively designated to the fulfillment of Jewish national aspirations. A solution of the Palestine problem must not only heal political rivalries of Jew and Arab, but must also safeguard its unique religious values."

Approaches to Solution

The problem of Palestine is so complex that one could go on endlessly discussing the various aspects. The economic aspect is a tremendous field in itself. There are such matters as the small size of the country, equal only to the states of Vermont or New Hampshire in the U.S.A. (about 10,000 square miles), but with something like three times the population of those states. Along with this goes the problem of "absorptive capacity," *i.e.*, calculation of the number of people who could live in Palestine under certain conditions.

Two Economies

Two economies, the primitive Arab and the advanced Jewish, exist side by side in Palestine and yet to a certain extent are interconnected. The advanced Jewish economy has been aided by the importation of outside capital, furnished by world Jewry. The weak and primitive Arab economy could hardly stand alone; practically all proposals for partition include a scheme of subvention for the Arab State. The Zionists and others (such as Lowdermilk*) have proposed schemes of hydroelectric development and industrialization. But the fact remains that Palestine is not naturally a country rich enough to support a dense population. And the question remains as to where capital is to be obtained for large scale development.

Wide variations in the interpretation of the economic conditions and prospects are possible. But "absorptive capacity" for Jewish immigrants is really the basic moot question in the economic field. In 1922 (Churchill White Paper) the British laid down the principle of "economic absorptive capacity" for regulation of Jewish immigration. By 1939 (MacDonald White Paper) the principle had become practically (though not in so many words) "political absorp-

*Walter C. Lowdermilk, *Palestine: Land of Promise* (New York: Harpers, 1944).

tive capacity"—in other words, an immigration policy determined by Arab political pressure. Thus what had begun as a largely economic matter had ended up as a largely political matter.

So it is in the Palestine question as a whole: the political problem is always before us. And the chief political problem is Jewish immigration. Even the "State" issue revolves around this: the Arabs want an Arab State in order to stop Jewish immigration absolutely; the Zionists want a Jewish State in order to have unlimited immigration. This is not the whole story of the demands for an Arab State or a Jewish State; but it is a large part of it.

Unitary Solutions

Unitary solutions may be divided into those proposing independence and those proposing non-independence (trusteeship). The former include proposals for an Arab State, a Jewish State, and a Bi-National State. The Arab State would doubtless result if external control were removed from Palestine, since the Arabs are in the majority and are anxious for political self-expression. If Palestine were an ordinary country, the case for an Arab State would be extremely good, perhaps incontestable. But Palestine is no ordinary country. Even with guarantees of religious freedom and special cultural rights for the Jewish minority, it is probable that outside help would be needed for the protection of the Jews. Thus there would be no real independence for Palestine. And the absolute stoppage of Jewish immigration would hardly be fair at the moment, with so many Jewish refugees seeking asylum.

The Jewish State can be ruled out immediately, since the Jews are a minority of one-third, and a very heavy forced immigration would be necessary to make them equal to the Arabs. And very soon the Arabs would be ahead again because of their high birth rate. Arab leaders have also threatened, in the event of an "immigration race," to bring in ten Arabs to every

one Jew. It is significant that the Jewish Agency has now given up its demand for a Jewish State in the whole of Palestine and is supporting the partition scheme proposed by the majority of the special committee of the United Nations (UNSCOP). It is hardly necessary to mention the political difficulties which would beset a Jewish State which included all of Palestine. The very idea is so distasteful to all Arabs, Palestinian and non-Palestinian, that the gravest political repercussions would result from its implementation. There would probably be a war between the Arabs and the Jewish underground military organizations, and the Arab States might withdraw from the United Nations.

A Bi-National State

The alternative scheme of unitary independence is the Bi-National State. In this the Jews and Arabs would be given cultural and political equality regardless of numbers. Hashomer Hatzair (left-wing socialist Zionist group) and The Ihud (Union) Association (headed by Dr. Magnes, president of the Hebrew University) have proposed solutions of this type. It may be that the Bi-National State is the ultimate answer to the problem of Palestine. Multi-national arrangements have been notably successful in Switzerland, South Africa, and the Soviet Union, as indicated in Oscar I. Janowsky's recent book, *Nationalities and National Minorities*.^{*} People of different language, religion and culture *can* learn to live together in peace; it has been done.

However, a bi-national independent state in Palestine cannot be set up immediately, owing to the sharp conflict and sensitive feelings now prevalent in the country. A further period of trusteeship would be necessary. This brings us to the proposals for non-independence, whether temporary or permanent. Since the British have made it abundantly clear that they are actually leaving Palestine soon, it is incumbent on the United Nations

^{*}New York: Macmillan, 1945.

to make whatever arrangements are necessary, whether independence is envisaged or not. If Palestine is not to be independent it will need to become a so-called "trust territory."

Administration by UN

Under Article 81 of the Charter of the United Nations, the administering authority of a trust territory may be one or more states or the United Nations Organization itself. In this case, because of the problem of the three religions and the consequent interest of the whole world in Palestine, to say nothing of the tense political situation, the administering authority should probably be the United Nations Organization itself. Along with this it should be noted that there will be a considerable need of policing at first under the new arrangement; hence it is quite important for the United Nations to set up the international police force as soon as possible.

Whether Palestine should ever be completely independent is open to question, because of the interest of the three world religions in the country. Palestine belongs to the world. What happens there is never of purely local interest. It might be that, if Arabs and Jews learned that they would never be allowed to dominate one another, they would settle down to a common loyalty to Palestine. In such an event a considerable degree of self-government could be allowed. But the outside world would still have an abiding interest. Perhaps permanent internationalization (if such a thing be conceivable) would best serve the interests of all parties, including the outside world. But complete political independence would thus be denied to the residents of Palestine. Palestine would belong to the world somewhat as the District of Columbia belongs to the whole U.S.A.

A Federalization Plan

The minority report of the UN committee is a so-called federalization plan, wherein there would be an Arab state and a Jewish state under an independent federal government. Partial

separation and considerable local autonomy would thus be provided for. Immigration into the Jewish state would be according to economic absorptive capacity, to be determined by an international commission. This proposal is put forward with an eloquent plea for reconciliation and unity, but so far it has gained little support, except from Dr. Magnes, who wishes to make it a basis for further discussion.

Partition

Partition appeals to many as a possible compromise of conflicting claims. It so appealed in theory to the Royal Commission of 1937. But when the Partition Commission went out in 1938 to implement partition, they found the task so difficult as to be well nigh impossible. They had behind them the authority of the British Government and the assent of the League of Nations, but still they could find no way to put the Jews and Arabs of Palestine into separate states that would "make sense." It may truly be said, then, that the "Partition" Commission killed partition, at least for the time being.

But partition has come to the fore again with the recent report of the UN committee on Palestine, whose majority recommended partition. This majority report was approved and supported by both the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. before the General Assembly. Hence its adoption was guaranteed in spite of strenuous opposition by the Arab states.

Certainly it is an attractive idea to think of putting the Jews and Arabs of Palestine into separate compartments and thus to have done with their conflicts. What are the objections and difficulties?

Objections to Partition

First, the Arabs of Palestine and surrounding countries are apparently almost unanimously opposed to it, and are putting up a strenuous fight against it, even making threats of war. Since the UN action, riots have already occurred, costing more

than one hundred lives. Second, on the Jewish side, while the Jewish Agency is now prepared to accept partition, the Revisionists and their underground organization were bitterly opposed, and have made threats to take all Palestine by force. Their present stand is not clear.

There is also the problem of how to divide. For, if the Jewish State receives a comparatively large part of Palestine, it will have an *Arab* majority; and if the Jewish State be small enough to exclude most Arabs it will not be able to receive enough immigrants to help the Jewish refugee problem to any extent. Any compromise between these two points will produce a Jewish State with a large (and difficult) Arab minority. For example, in the Report of the Partition Commission of 1938, the Arab minority in Plan A was 49 per cent, in Plan B 38 per cent, and in Plan C 19 per cent. But in Plan C the Jewish State was absurdly small. The UN committee plan estimates an Arab minority of about 45 per cent. Presumably this difficulty is to be overcome to some extent by heavy Jewish immigration.

Another difficulty is with regard to the mixed towns such as Haifa and Jerusalem, where Jews and Arabs are fairly well balanced in number. Still another problem is the protection of the holy places of all three religions. The UN majority plan proposes to internationalize Jerusalem and its environs, including Bethlehem, because of the holy places in this area. This will not altogether solve the problem, however, since there are holy places scattered all about the country. With regard to the problem of the mixed Arab-Jewish population of this area, it is proposed to allow the Arabs and Jews to become citizens of the Arab and Jewish States, respectively. Haifa has been allotted to the Jewish State. However, the completely Arab town of Jaffa has been assigned to the Arab State, as suggested in the U.S. statement before the General Assembly.

Unscrambling Will Be Difficult

There is also the problem of Arab and Jewish land holdings. Each side now has land scattered about the whole country, the

holdings intertwined with one another. Unscrambling the land holdings will be a formidable task.

Indeed, the problem of "unscrambling" everything will be formidable. Partition is a fairly recent proposal. All the present conditions in the country have come about on the assumption of an ultimate unity in the country.

There is also the question of "viability" or the economic self-sufficiency of the two states. A unitary Palestine could stand on its own feet, but in partition the Arab State in particular would be bankrupt from the start. The UN committee majority has proposed an economic union of the two States to meet the problem of viability. But the question has been raised whether political division plus economic union will make a workable formula.

Small wonder, then, that the feeling exists in the minds of many that a unitary solution should be achieved if at all possible, and that partition is to be resorted to after all attempts at a more ideal solution have failed. It is understandable that even up to a late date the UN had a subcommittee working on the possibility of bringing about a reconciliation between Arabs and Zionists.*

The Refugee Problem Will Remain

But if the unitary solution has now failed and partition is imposed successfully, it will still be necessary to remember the words of Richard Crossman, himself an advocate of partition: ". . . an independent Jewish Commonwealth, if established, would be bound to return to a policy of highly selective immi-

*The most eloquent statement of opposition to partition is that of President Judah L. Magnes in his letter to the *New York Times* of September 28, 1947. He said in part: "Palestine is not just a Jewish land or just an Arab land. It is a common Jewish-Arab land, an international inter-religious land of Jew, Christian and Moslem. There can be no such thing as full national independence for the Jews and full national independence for the Arabs of Palestine, partition or no partition. Why then partition the country?"

gration. The greatest help which Britain and America can give to Palestinian Jewry would be to tackle the refugee problem and so relieve Palestine of an impossible burden." (*Palestine Mission* (New York: Harpers, 1947), p. 204.)

Since the above article was written before the UN action of November 29, the Editor has kindly given me permission to make some slight changes in the page proof, and to add a few personal comments on the latest developments. It must be borne in mind that attempts to appraise the immediate present or predict the future are necessarily somewhat speculative.

With regard to the action of the UN, it seems to me that the UN, largely through the fault of its Special Committee, got itself into the unhappy position of having to choose between the two rival nationalisms, without a third alternative (such as internationalization of the whole country) that would have moved on a plane above the nationalisms and would have appealed clearly to the collective conscience of the world. Thus the decision was bound to be a partisan one, pro-Zionist or pro-Arab. Under pressure from the U.S.A. and Russia, the General Assembly, after a bitter fight, decided by a close vote for partition (the majority plan). This delighted most of the Zionists but outraged most of the Arabs. A decision in favor of federalization (the minority plan), on the other hand, would have been a pro-Arab decision; for, I think, any partition plan would be a pro-Zionist plan, since it accepts the principle of a Jewish state; and any plan for unitary independence would be a pro-Arab plan, since the Arabs have a decided majority in Palestine.

—W.F.S.

When a particularly controversial question has been under consideration in a number of SOCIAL ACTION, we have sometimes asked representatives of opposing points of view to comment on the main article. In keeping with this policy, we have submitted advance copies of Professor Stinespring's article to representatives of Zionist and anti-Zionist organizations, and the two articles which follow contain their comments.—EDITORS

Comments: From a Christian Zionist

By CARL H. VOSS†

I have read with interest the copy of Professor Stinespring's manuscript. This treatment of the Palestine issue is clearly being made by one who is deeply sympathetic with the Arab position. He cannot help but convey this feeling in the manuscript, putting much warmth into his explanation of the Arab stand and relating the Jewish case in a dry, formal manner which leaves the reader as cold as the author obviously is. In addition, instead of delineating the various alternative solutions, Professor Stinespring adopts the very definite attitude of opposing those solutions which he dislikes and advocating those solutions which appeal to him.

The section of Professor Stinespring's article which deals with Arab nationalism represents a summary of the Arab case couched in very friendly and understanding terms. There is, of course, every reason why a section on this subject should be included in the article. My only question is regarding Professor Stinespring's identification of the position of extreme nationalists with the large masses of the Arabs of Palestine and other countries—which occurs throughout this section. There is

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abundant evidence that the position outlined by Professor Stinespring is taken by a very small top layer of the Palestine Arab population, and that the large mass of Palestine Arabs is far from these views. Bartley Crum notes this in his widely read *Behind the Silken Curtain*. My own observations on my trip to Palestine last summer bore out his comments in this matter.

The sections purporting to deal with the Jewish case are, by contrast, grossly inadequate. They do not give the reader any conception of the psychological and social forces which have impelled the large masses of Jews toward Zionism. Where the sections on Arab nationalism make a great to-do about alleged British promises to the Arabs, the legal foundation of the Jewish National Home policy in international law is by-passed almost completely. Where the Arab nationalists are represented—without any evidence whatsoever—as the overwhelming majority of Arab opinion, Zionists and anti-Zionists are depicted by the author as two Jewish factions, with no indication of the tremendous numerical disproportion between the two. The anti-Zionists are a singularly small group in Jewry—powerful and vocal, yes, but still a small group.

On page 19, there is an interesting omission in that none of the Jewish religious shrines in present-day Palestine is mentioned, though shrines are mentioned in the sections devoted to Christian and Moslem interests.

On page 20, the fact of Jewish nationality is made to appear the whim of a few small Jewish groups. Isn't this a rather whimsical attempt to rewrite history?

On page 21, the author offers—as a dogmatic statement of fact—that "Palestine is not naturally a country rich enough to support a dense population." How does he know? Leading economic experts believe differently. Jewish colonization in Palestine seems to have proven otherwise; and if you remember your ancient history, Palestine once supported quite a dense population in the days of Jesus, when agriculture and industry were far less advanced than they are today.

I also question Professor Stinespring's off-hand ruling-out of a Jewish State in the whole of Palestine (pages 22-23). The fact of the matter is that precisely that was the intention of Woodrow Wilson and Lloyd George at a time when the Jews constituted a smaller proportion of the population of Palestine—and their authority should have sufficed to give a more courteous reception to this idea, which was the ultimate purpose of the Palestine Mandate.

Nor do I understand why the fact that there are in Palestine Holy Places other than Jerusalem and Bethlehem should be listed among the objections to a Jewish State in *part* of Palestine (page 26). As it happens, the most important of those Holy Places—Nazareth and Hebron—are located in Arab areas.

It is interesting that having dismissed a great many statements and much evidence in favor of the Jewish State, Professor Stinespring goes out of his way to proclaim that the creation of a Jewish State would not solve the Jewish refugee problem—as he does on page 28 on the authority of Mr. Richard Crossman. Since the largest estimates of present and future Jewish refugees that I have seen anywhere—and which include Jews in Arab countries as well as in Europe—do not exceed a million-and-a-half, I do not see how a Jewish State capable of absorbing that number of immigrants would fail to solve the problem.

The above are some examples of specific statements which do not seem to me to attest to an objective and fair treatment, but which seem to be instances of genuine misinterpretation. In addition to the need for correcting these statements, I should like to emphasize once more the need to have the sections dealing with the Jewish case re-written by an author capable of giving it the same sympathetic consideration which Professor Stinespring afforded the Arab case.

I also stress the need to terminate the article by delineating the various proposed solutions, rather than by making propaganda against the solution adopted by the United Nations Committee and supported by our own Government.

Comments: From a Jewish Anti-Zionist

By LESSING J. ROSENWALD†

Please accept my very heartiest thanks for giving me the opportunity to comment on Dr. Stinespring's article, which I have read with much interest.

First of all, I must state that I am to be included in that group classified as anti-Zionist (on page 12, footnote), and my comments must, therefore, be considered in that light.

The article is clear, and I believe it as impartial a one as is possible under present-day conditions. Historians in the future, in a calmer atmosphere, may be able to point to a certain bias, but it cannot be avoided today.

On page 12 (footnote), Dr. Stinespring indicates that Jews are all divided into two categories, which express their attitude toward Palestine: the Zionists and the anti-Zionists. It is true that these two groups are the only organized groups expressing themselves, the Zionists being by far the older and larger, and the anti-Zionists—only four years old—relatively few in number. It is my opinion that both groups combined represent less than a majority of world Jewry. By far the larger number of Jews have not declared themselves for either side, being either apathetic or fearful of causing a schism in the ranks of Jewry at a time when so many of their co-religionists are suffering in Displaced Persons camps and in their own native lands of Central Europe. Furthermore, it is my belief that many of those who adhere to Zionism do so primarily because they believe that Zionism offers the only solution to aid this tortured section of humanity; they are not basically interested in the formation of a political Jewish State. The anti-Zionists are likewise interested in utilizing Palestine as *one* of the countries of refuge

†Mr. Rosenwald is president of the American Council for Judaism, Inc.

to help solve this disgraceful condition, and they have advocated the emigration of substantial numbers to Palestine as one means of bringing about a satisfactory solution.

It should be noted that in Article XII of the UNSCOP Report, it says, "... in the appraisal of the Palestine question it be accepted as incontrovertible that any solution for Palestine cannot be considered as a solution of the Jewish problem in general."

Dr. Stinespring says "The chief political problem (in Palestine) is Jewish immigration." On pages 21-22, one is led to question this statement alone. It is my belief that it is Jewish immigration *plus* the avowed intent of constituting a Jewish majority in Palestine thereby that is the nub of the situation. It is contended that if the Zionists would forever forego the formation of a nationalistic Jewish State in Palestine, and if the Arabs could be convinced of their sincerity, substantial Jewish immigration could continue into Palestine without undue Arab opposition. It has been the work of years for the Zionists to foster Jewish immigration into Palestine for every conceivable reason, from within Europe and from without, for the sole purpose of creating a majority in Palestine, at which time they hoped that an independent state could be established there in the whole of that country.

One last point. It is true that the Jewish Agency has "now given up its demand for a Jewish State in the whole of Palestine and is supporting the partition scheme." On the other hand, there is ample evidence to indicate that this is only an initial step towards the gaining of their ultimate objective—a Jewish State in the whole of Palestine. As a practical measure the Jewish Agency is accepting the inevitable in a partitioned Palestine. There is no question but that once established, in its own State, ways and means will be sought to enlarge the area and domination in that State in Palestine until the goal of the whole country is attained.

For Further Reading

- Antonius, George. *The Arab Awakening*. First edition, London, 1938; reprinted by Hamish Hamilton, London, 1945. Obtainable from the Arab Office, Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, D.C. The standard work on Arab nationalism from the Arab point of view.
- Crossman, Richard. *Palestine Mission: A Personal Record*. New York: Harpers, 1947. A brilliant analysis by the young British M.P. and member of the Anglo-American Committee. Favors partition, but also sees its limitations and difficulties.
- Crum, Bartley C. *Behind the Silken Curtain*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1947. An account by an American member of the Anglo-American Committee. Superficial in understanding and treatment, but interestingly written from a frankly pro-Zionist point of view.
- Palestine: A Study of Jewish, Arab, and British Policies*. 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947. Published for the Esco Foundation for Palestine, Inc. A huge work of 1380 pages, from a moderate Zionist point of view, covering everything up to and including the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry.
- Parkes, James. *The Jewish Problem in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1946. A splendid little book on the world Jewish problem as a background of the trouble in Palestine.
- Speiser, E. A. *The United States and the Near East*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947. An excellent and impartial survey by an eminent archeologist and historian.
- A Survey of Palestine*. 2 vols. Prepared by the British-controlled Government of Palestine for the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, 1946, revised for the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, 1947.

Recent Official Reports

- Palestine Royal Commission Report* (Cmd. 5479), 1937 (reprinted 1945). The now classic description of the difficulties, also known as the Peel Report. Recommended partition.
- Palestine Partition Commission Report* (Cmd. 5854), 1938. The Woodhead Report, which caused the British Government to abandon partition.
- Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry Report*, Department of State, Washington, 1945. Marks the entrance of the U.S. Government into direct contact with the problem. Recommends bi-national unity, with a long period of trusteeship.
- United Nations Special Committee on Palestine Report*, Lake Success, 1947. Majority recommendation adopted, with modifications, by the General Assembly.

—W.F.S.

On To Action

Christmas reminds us that Christ was born into an inhospitable world. Luke says, "there was no room for them in the inn" and the Fourth Gospel reiterates, "the darkness comprehendeth it not," "the world knew him not," and "his own received him not."

This issue of SOCIAL ACTION brings the Christmas "exclusion act" down to date and to our very doorstep. "The starting point for a peaceful solution of the Palestine problem is a change in the immigration policy of the United States," says Mr. Rostow. "The greatest help which Britain and America can give to Palestinian Jewry would be to tackle the refugee problem and so relieve Palestine of an impossible burden," says Mr. Crossman. But Congress has not yet acted upon the modest proposal that the United States accept 400,000 as its share of Displaced Persons. Our traditions encourage such action. Our opulent land could easily absorb them. Many civic, religious and labor groups support the proposal but to date we say in effect, "There's no room for them."

Veterans, minority groups and low-income families are seriously over-crowded, yet the Taft bill to provide more housing for middle and low-income groups languishes in Congress. In spite of our great wealth we are not building enough homes for the common people. "No room for them."

Western Europe's plight is also before Congress. Can we hold attention to the war against "hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos" or will the stress be put upon secondary effects such as a "cold war"? Can we preserve European initiative and keep the administration of the program flexible, or will we resort to imposing our own conditions? Whether recovery is really achieved or Western Europe becomes again a battlefield of rival powers depends in large measure upon us.

Christmas 1947 presents us with a world of displaced, destitute, desperate people. If we say, "Come in; here's a home; we'll build with you," the Prince of Peace is born again. If not, it is the same old story—"there was no room for them."

Ray Gibbons